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SUBJECT: ANBAR SALVATION COUNCIL FORMS NEW POLITICAL PARTY

Classified By: PRT Leader Jim Soriano for reasons 1.4 b/d

11. (U) This is a PRT Anbar cable.

12. SUMMARY. (C) The Anbar Salvation Council, formed to counter AQI in Ramadi, publicly announced the launching of its own political party: Iraqi Awakening Movement (IAM). This party was organized by Sheikh Sattar Abu Risha, who emphasized the IAM will have a widespread base with national appeal. Sattar and other local sheikhs urged that provincial elections be held as soon as possible. The announcement occurred during MNF-W DCG,s introductory office call to Sattar. Counter-terrorism activities and the possibility of provincial elections were also discussed. END SUMMARY.

13. (C) Sheikh Sattar Abu Risha, the leader of a coalition of Ramadi-based tribal leaders who are fighting Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) told MNF-West Deputy Commanding General John Allen on Feb. 26 of his intention to transform his movement into a political party. Sattar formed the &Anbar Salvation Council (SAA)⁸ last September to oppose AQI excesses in Ramadi. To date some twenty to thirty tribes and clans in the Ramadi area are considered part of the SAA movement. Sattar was at his residence near Ramadi to receive BGen Allen during the latter,s introductory call on him. Surrounded by some 100 Anbari sheikhs and other notables, Sattar announced his intention to form the &Iraqi Awakening Movement (IAM),⁸ a political grouping which, according to Sattar, will seek to have a national appeal and will eschew any particular sectarian affiliation. Sattar and the other sheikhs strongly urged that provincial elections be held as soon as possible.

14. (C) Atmospherics at the meeting were extremely positive. In a follow-on small-group meeting, Sattar discussed counter-terrorism activities with BGen Allen. Sattar re-affirmed his friendship to the Coalition and his commitment to work with the Coalition to defeat them.

Comment

15. (C) Since the emergence of the SAA on the Anbari scene last September, Sattar has been a political force in Anbar. Although his Ramadi-focused anti-AQI tribal movement is still a localized phenomenon, sheikhs in other parts of Anbar are seeking to imitate his success. Sattar,s bid to form a political party obviously demonstrates that he has an eye on playing a major role in the post-war environment. Although he talked about the need to avoid sectarian divisions in his nascent political party, it is likely that he envisions the new grouping as a vehicle for airing Sunni grievances and realizing Sunni political aspirations.
KHALILZAD